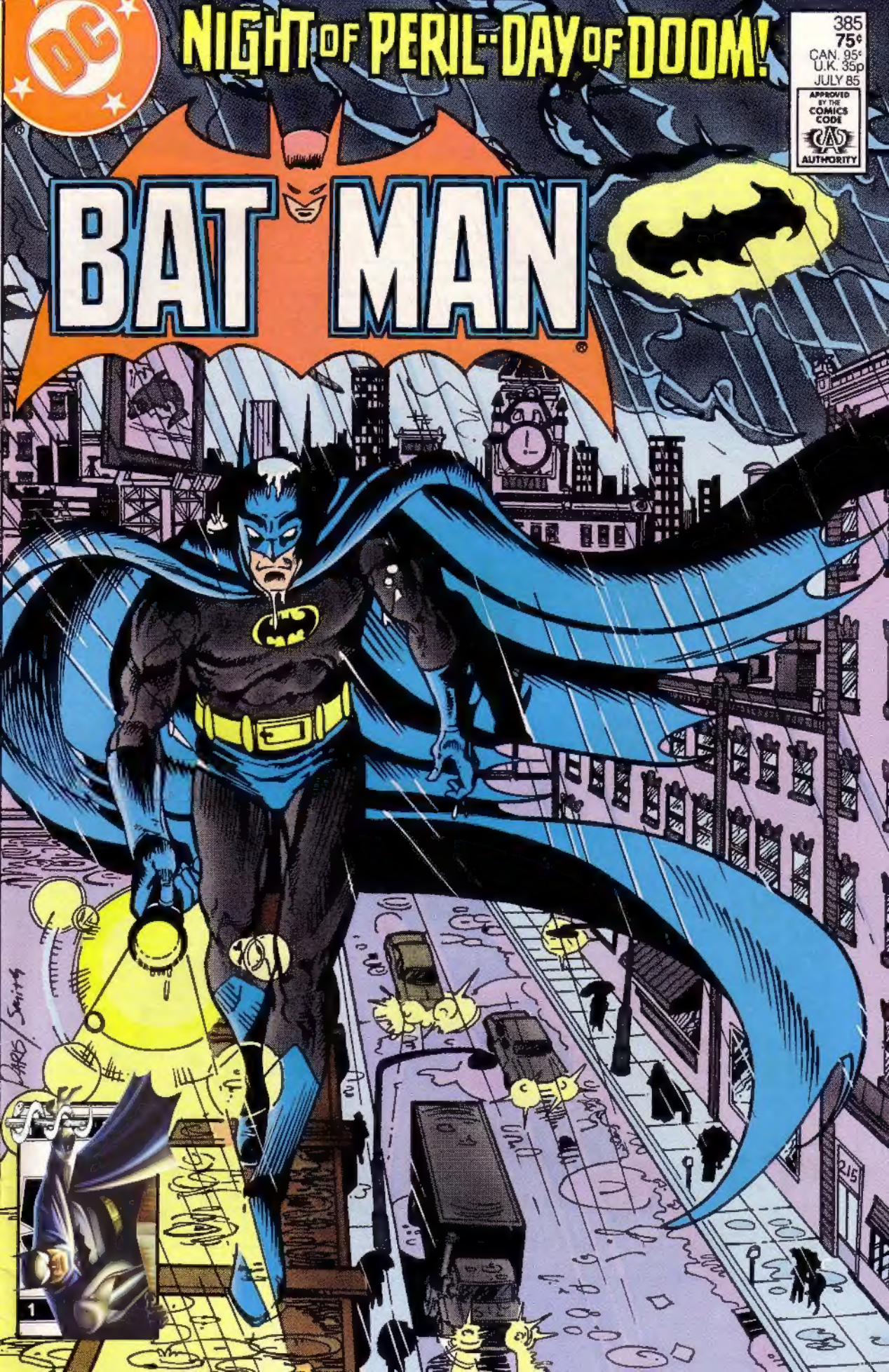
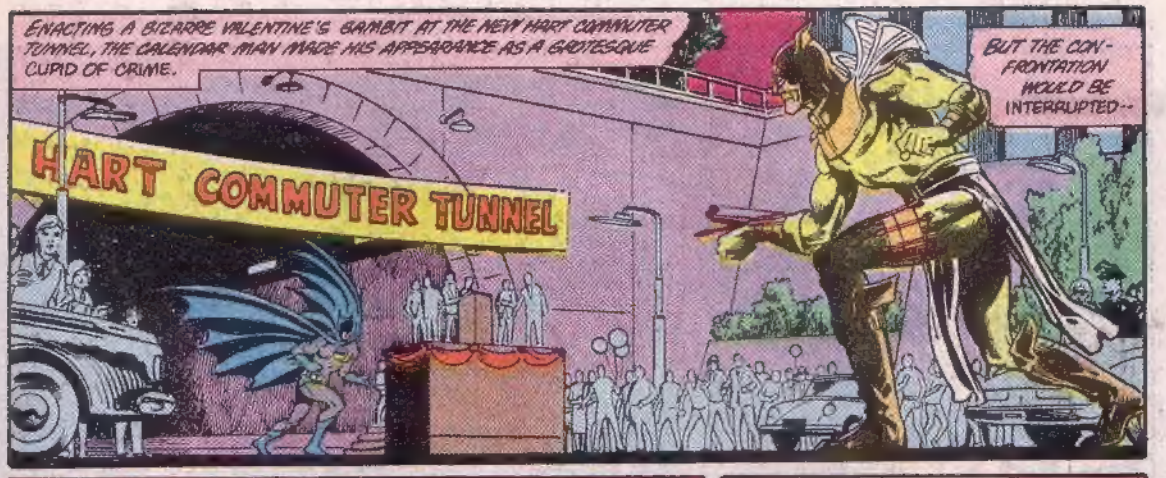
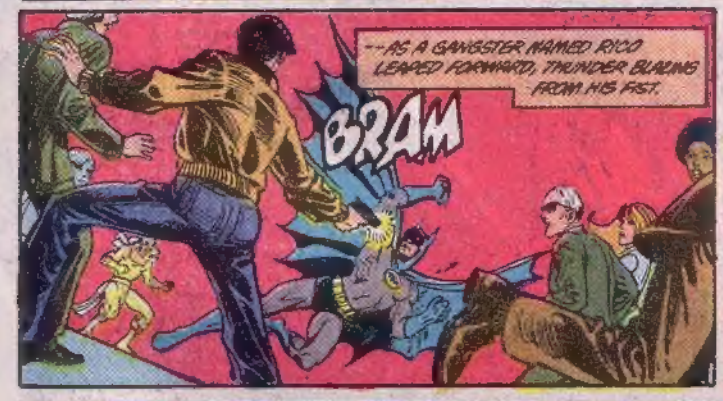
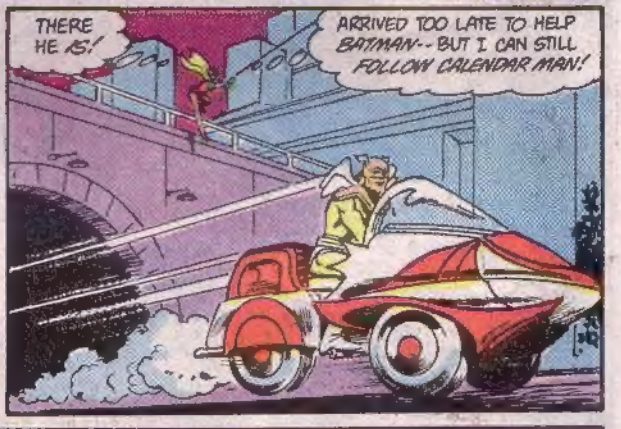

NIGHT OF PERIL--DAY OF DOOM!
385
75¢
CAN. 95¢
U.K. 35p
JULY 85
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BAT MAN


ENACTING A BIZARRE VALENTINE'S GAMBIT AT THE NEW HART COMMUTER TUNNEL, THE CALENDAR MAN MADE HIS APPEARANCE AS A GROTESQUE CUPID OF CRIME.
HART COMMUTER TUNNEL
BUT THE CONFRONTATION WOULD BE INTERRUPTED--





SO IT WAS THAT A WOUNDED BATMAN'S PAIN TURNED TO GRIM CONCERN--
--AS HE LEARNED THAT JASON TODD WAS MISSING FROM HIS ROOM AT WAYNE MANOR...
...ALONG WITH HIS ROBIN COSTUME.
G-1904

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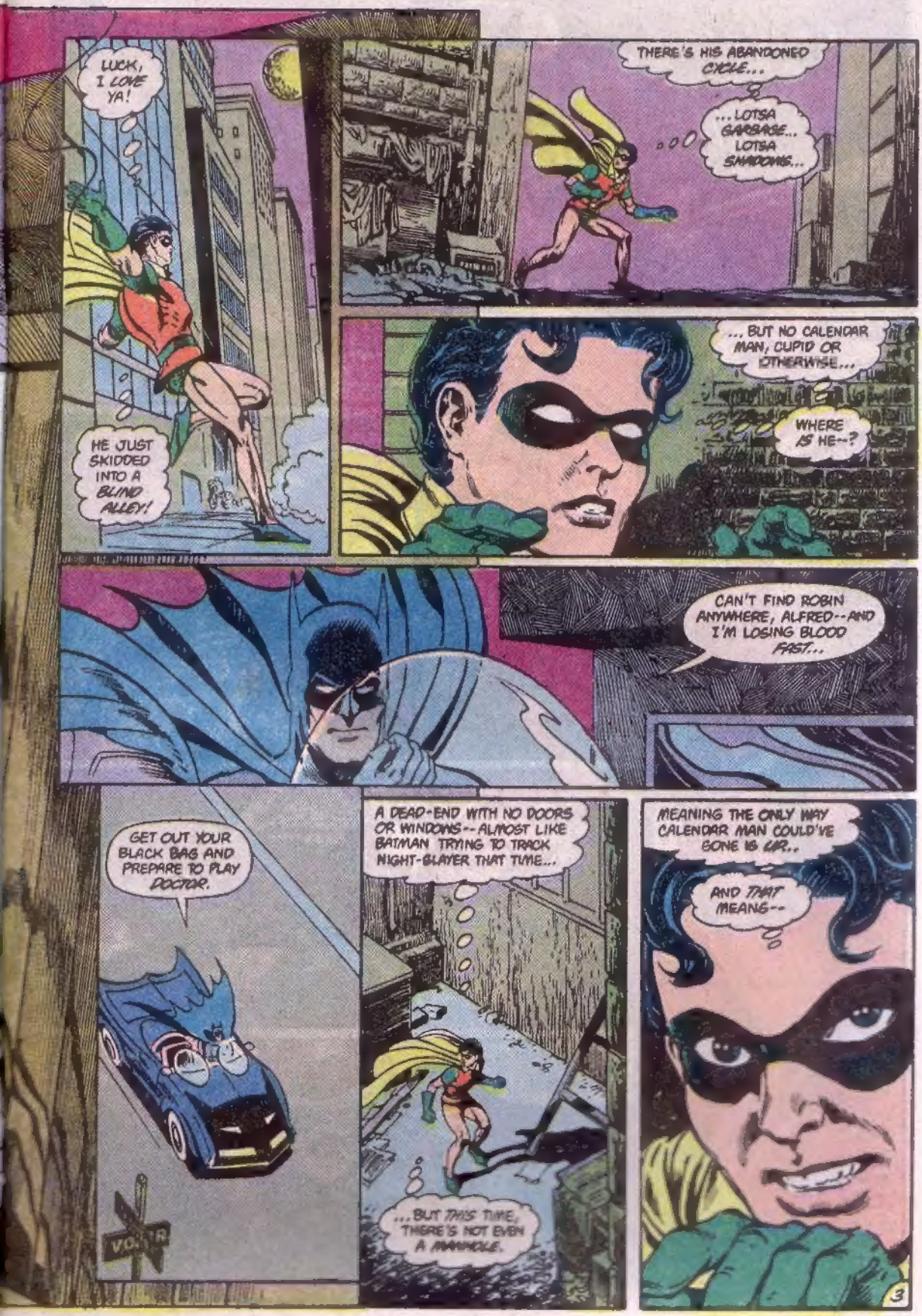
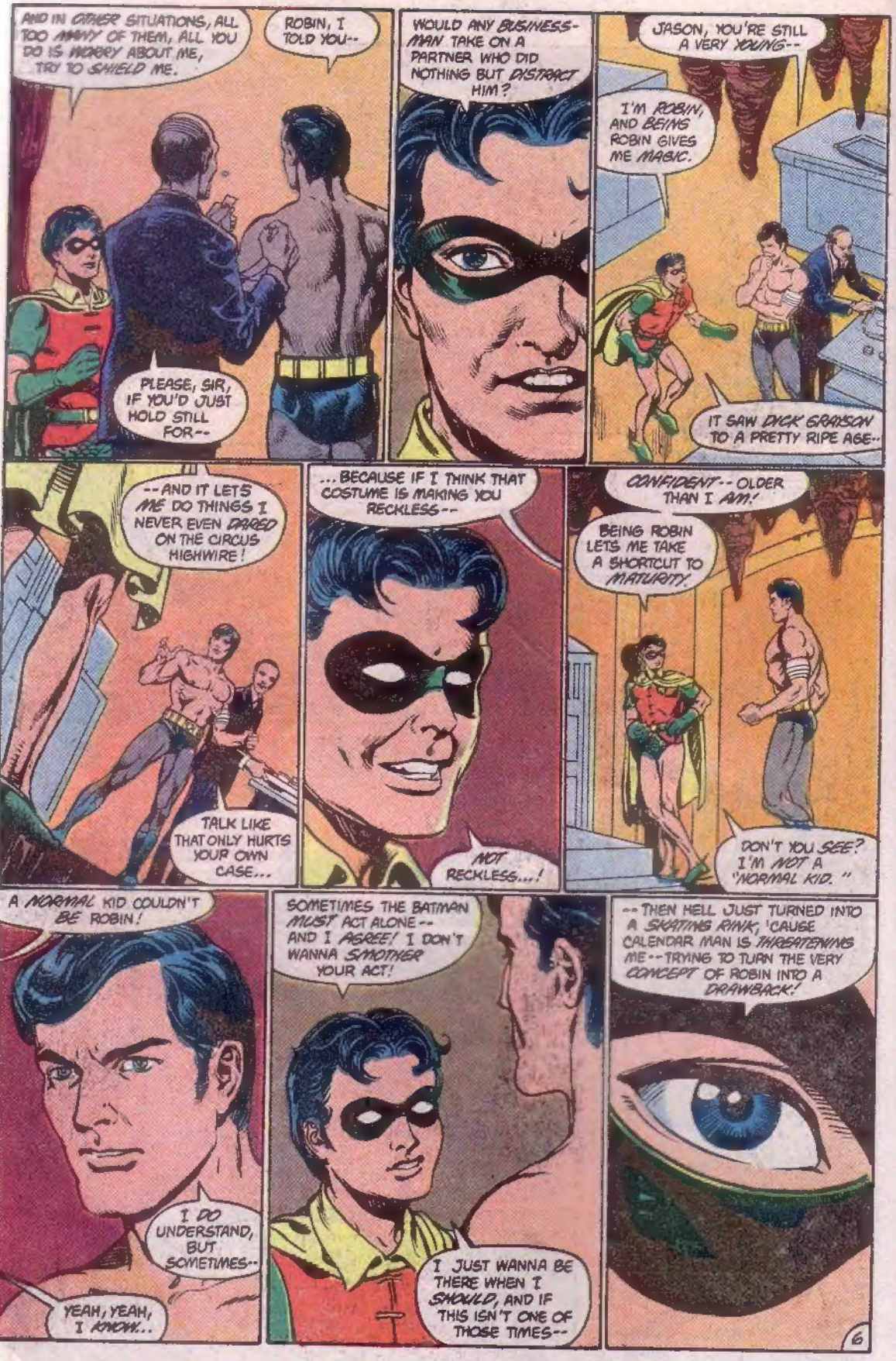
Phil & Doc Scan

DAY OF DOOM
BAT MAN
GOTTA KEEP CALENDAR MAN IN SIGHT--TRY TO FOLLOW HIM ALL THE WAY BACK TO HIS HIDEOUT...
HE'S SWORN TO KILL BATMAN ON THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING--THREE NIGHTS FROM NOW--BY USING ME AS BATMAN'S ACHILLES' HEEL...
AND A HEEL'S EXACTLY WHAT I FEEL LIKE--FOR DISOBEYING BATMAN AFTER HE CUT ME OUT OF THIS CASE.
BUT REGARDLESS OF CALENDAR MAN'S OPINION, I JUST CAN'T LET BATMAN THINK OF ME AS A WEAKNESS THAT NEEDS TO BE PROTECTED.
THE ONLY KIND OF HEEL I CAN AFFORD TO BE IS THE KIND THAT STOMPS CALENDAR MAN.
2
DOUG MOENCH WRITER
RICK HOBERG & CHUCK PATTON PENCILS
ALFREDO ALCALA INKS
JOHN COSTANZA LETTERS
ADRIENNE ROY COLORS
LEN WEIN EDITOR


LUCK, I LOVE YA!
HE JUST SKIDDED INTO A BLIND ALLEY!
THERE'S HIS ABANDONED CYCLE...
...LOTSA GARBAGE... LOTSA SHADOWS...
...BUT NO CALENDAR MAN, CUPID OR OTHERWISE...
WHERE IS HE--?
CAN'T FIND ROBIN ANYWHERE, ALFRED--AND I'M LOSING BLOOD FAST...
GET OUT YOUR BLACK BAG AND PREPARE TO PLAY DOCTOR.
A DEAD-END WITH NO DOORS OR WINDOWS--ALMOST LIKE BATMAN TRYING TO TRACK NIGHT-SLAYER THAT TIME...
...BUT THIS TIME, THERE'S NOT EVEN A MANHOLE.
MEANING THE ONLY WAY CALENDAR MAN COULD'VE GONE IS UP...
AND THAT MEANS--
3

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

... BUT I ONLY MADE A SLIMY BARRICADE FOR MYSELF.
TRADED HIS CYCLE FOR FREEDOM.
HE'S LONG GONE... LEAVING ME WITH ROTTEN EGG ON MY FACE.
THE BATCAVE!
CAN'T YOU HURRY WITH THAT, ALFRED?
SIR, THE BANDAGE MUST BE--
AND SORRY ABOUT THE STINK--BUT I FAILED.
ROBIN!
FOLLOWED CALENDAR MAN FROM THE HART TUNNEL AND TANGLED WITH HIM IN AN ALLEY NEAR GROVE AND DOHENY.
HE... GOT AWAY.
YOU DELIBERATELY DISOBEYED ME, ROBIN.
OKAY, SO I DIDN'T TAKE HIM...
... BUT I STOOD HIM OFF TO A DRAW, AND LET'S NOT FORGET...
YOU DIDN'T TAKE HIM EITHER, BUT MAYBE TOGETHER WE--
WHEN I SAID NO, ROBIN, MY DECISION WAS FINAL.
AS LONG AS CALENDAR MAN'S STATED OBJECTIVE IS TO REACH ME BY ENDANGERING YOU--
BUT I'VE GOT TO HIT THE STREETS AGAIN, SEARCH FOR ROBIN UNTIL--
SEARCH ENDED, BATMAN.
LOOK, BATMAN, I'M SUPPOSED TO BE YOUR PARTNER!
I'M SUPPOSED TO BE A HELP TO YOU, NOT A HINDRANCE.
YOU ARE A HELP TO ME--IN THE RIGHT SITUATIONS.
5


AND IN OTHER SITUATIONS, ALL TOO MANY OF THEM, ALL YOU DO IS WORRY ABOUT ME, TRY TO SHIELD ME.
ROBIN, I TOLD YOU--
PLEASE, SIR, IF YOU'D JUST HOLD STILL FOR--
WOULD ANY BUSINESS-MAN TAKE ON A PARTNER WHO DID NOTHING BUT DISTRACT HIM?
JASON, YOU'RE STILL A VERY YOUNG--
I'M ROBIN, AND BEING ROBIN GIVES ME MAGIC.
IT SAW DICK GRAYSON TO A PRETTY RIPE AGE--
--AND IT LETS ME DO THINGS I NEVER EVEN DARED ON THE CIRCUS HIGHWIRE!
TALK LIKE THAT ONLY HURTS YOUR OWN CASE...
...BECAUSE IF I THINK THAT COSTUME IS MAKING YOU RECKLESS--
NOT RECKLESS...!
CONFIDENT-- OLDER THAN I AM!
BEING ROBIN LETS ME TAKE A SHORTCUT TO MATURITY.
DON'T YOU SEE? I'M NOT A "NORMAL KID."
A NORMAL KID COULDN'T BE ROBIN!
I DO UNDERSTAND, BUT SOMETIMES--
YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW...
SOMETIMES THE BATMAN MUST ACT ALONE-- AND I AGREE! I DON'T WANNA SMOTHER YOUR ACT!
I JUST WANNA BE THERE WHEN I SHOULD, AND IF THIS ISN'T ONE OF THOSE TIMES--
--THEN HELL JUST TURNED INTO A SKATING RINK, 'CAUSE CALENDAR MAN IS THREATENING ME--TRYING TO TURN THE VERY CONCEPT OF ROBIN INTO A DRAWBACK!

IF I LET HIM SUCCEED--IF WE LET HIM SUCCEED--WE'LL BE ADMITTING THAT I'M A DANGER TO YOU RATHER THAN AN AID.
BATMAN PLUS ROBIN MUST EQUAL MORE THAN BATMAN--NOT LESS.
HE HAS A POINT, SIR.
ALL RIGHT, YOU'VE GOT A POINT, BUT--
NO BUTS, BATMAN--PLEASE.
IT ALL BOILS DOWN TO TWO THINGS: DOES THE BATMAN REALLY NEED A ROBIN--AND AM I GOOD ENOUGH TO BE ROBIN?
YES OR NO?
IF I SAY NO...
I'LL TAKE OFF THIS COSTUME RIGHT NOW AND NEVER SAY ANOTHER WORD ABOUT IT--PERFECTLY HAPPY TO BE JASON TODD AND PROUD TO CALL BRUCE WAYNE MY FATHER.
I DON'T BELIEVE THAT FOR A MINUTE--BUT IF I SAY YES...?
THEN WE'RE A TEAM IN WHICH YOU CALL ALL THE SHOTS.
AS LONG AS YOU RESPECT ME AS ROBIN, I'LL DO WHATEVER YOU SAY.
I...I DON'T KNOW...
I... JUST... CAN'T...

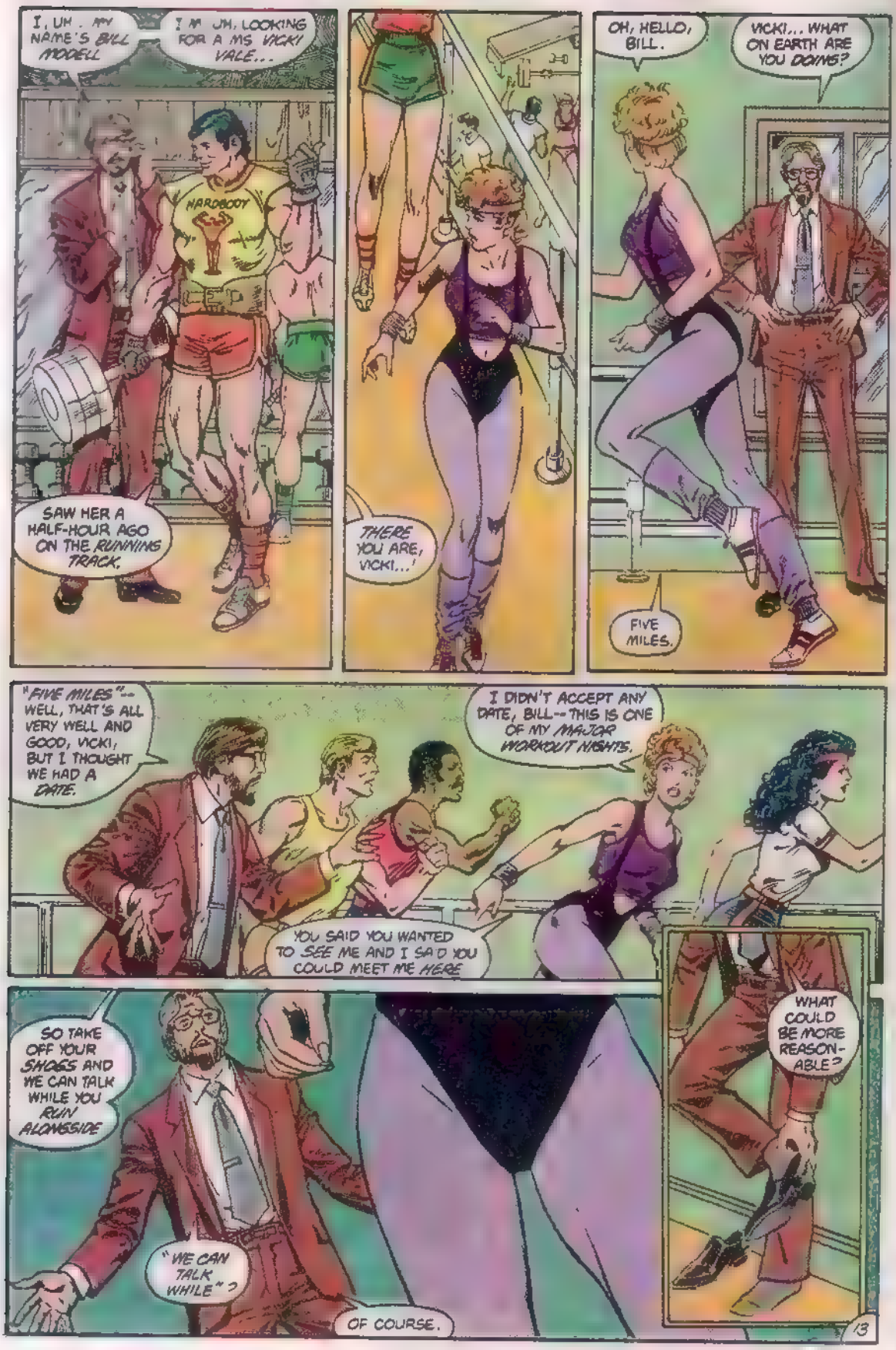
YES.
YAHOOO!!
A "SHORTCUT TO MATURITY," HUH?
SO WHO SAYS MATURITY RULES OUT JUBILANCE?
MMP-- PROBABLY BE BLEEDING AGAIN AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS...
CALENDAR MAN'S SANCTUM:
BEGINNING TO HAVE MY DOUBTS ABOUT ROBIN BEING BATMAN'S "WEAKNESS"-- THE KID IS STUNNINGLY FAST...
... WITH MORE THAN ENOUGH TIMING AND REFLEX TO AMPLIFY HIS STRENGTH.
BUT IT'S TOO LATE NOW-- THE CALENDAR HAS ALREADY BEEN MARKED, AND THE INSTRUMENT OF BATMAN'S DEATH IS ALMOST COMPLETED.
TWO MORE CRIMES, AND THEN... DEATHDAY.
NIGHT OF THE FOLLOWING DAY:
TWO MORE NIGHTS, TWO MORE CRIMES BASED ON CALENDAR HOLIDAYS, BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING...
MAYBE BOTH OF US, ROBIN.
... WHEN HE'S VOWED TO KILL YOU ON THE BIRTH OF A NEW SEASON.
DON'T WORRY-- I HAVEN'T GOTTEN COCKY.
8
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

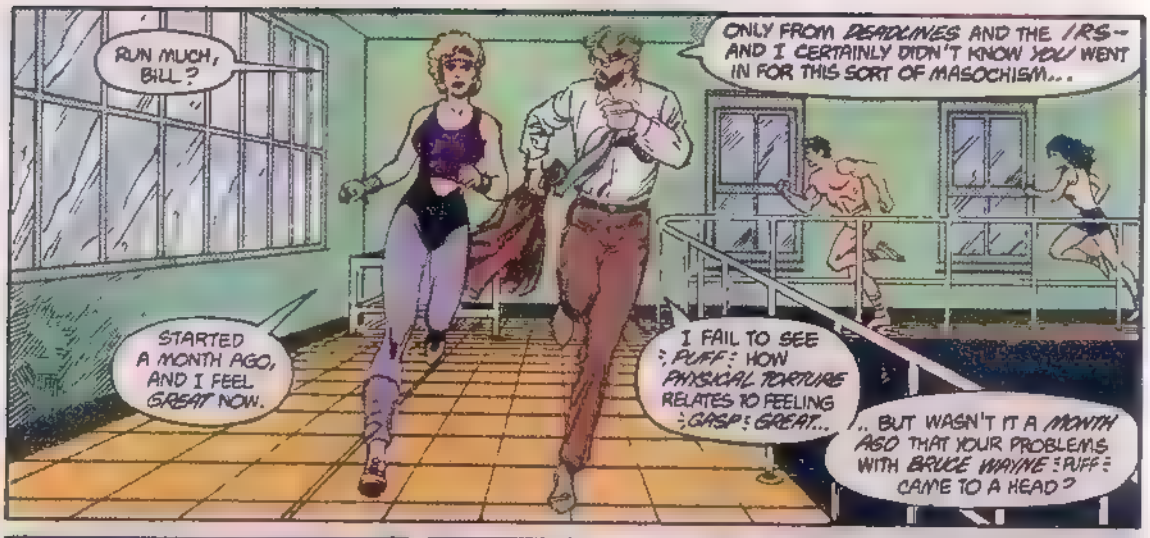
WE'VE ALREADY USED THE COMPUTERS TO DEDUCE THAT TONIGHT'S "WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY" CRIME WILL PROBABLY BE STAGED AT CAPITOL SAVINGS AND LOAN, WHICH IS OPEN TILL NINE TONIGHT...
RIGHT-- SO WE STILL HAVE A FEW HOURS BEFORE WE HAVE TO--
BEEP BEEP BEEP
BATMAN? YOUR WOULD-BE ASSASSIN IS RICO SERVAIS, ONE OF THE LATE DR. FANG'S BOYS--
--AND IT SEEMS THEY'RE THE ONES WHO HIRED CALENDAR MAN TO KILL YOU.
WHICH EXPLAINS CALENDAR MAN'S CHANGE IN M.O., GORDON--NONE OF OUR PAST TANGLES WERE DESIGNED TO BE FATAL.
ANYTHING ELSE?
BULLOCK'S GOT SOMETHING--HOLD ON.
BEEN FOLLOWIN' A LINE OF INFO FOR WEEKS-- AND WE'RE READY TO MAKE A CRASH.
BUT I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT WANNA CONFER WITH 'EM FIRST...
"SEEMS THEY HANG OUT IN A PLACE DOCKSIDE--ON PIER 39."
SO NOW CALENDAR MAN AND RICO HAVE BOTH FAILED.
YEAH, AND IF WE DON'T ICE BATMAN SOON--
WHAT THE--? HERE?!
DON'T TALK!
WE DON'T GOTTA SAY NOTHIN' TILL WE SEE OUR LAWYERS!
9

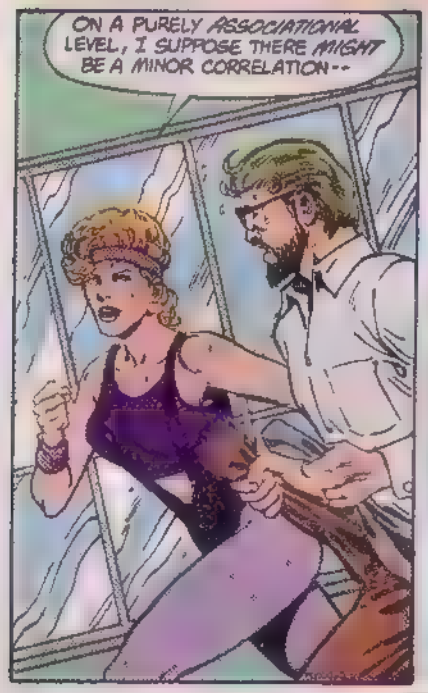
TALK AND YOU MAY NOT NEED LAWYERS
YOU'LL.. LET US GO?
A-ALL RIGHT... WHAT'S THE QUESTION?
WHERE DO I FIND CALENDAR MAN?
W-WE DON'T KNOW-- SWEAR TO YA! WE HIRED HIM THROUGH A MIDDLE-MAN--THE MONITOR!
GET OUT
AND THE THUGS GLADLY SCRAMBLE.
..UNTIL--
FREEZE-- YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!
STINKIN' BATMAN -HE BETRAYED US!
IF THEY HAD TOLD US WHAT WE WANTED TO KNOW, WOULD YOU HAVE LET THEM GO?
YES-- BUT BULLOCK AND HIS BOYS WOULDN'T HAVE
ONLY FOR A GOOD CAUSE, ROBIN
THEN BATMAN IS WILLING TO BEND THE TRUTH FROM TIME TO TIME

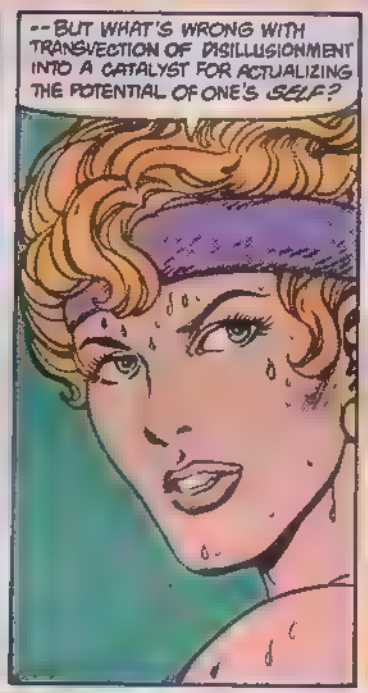
"...AND I SURE HOPE WE'VE PEGGED THE RIGHT TARGET."
IT'S BEEN CLOSED FOR A WHILE NOW.
CAPITOL SAVINGS & LOANS
YOU TAKE THE BACK, ROBIN, AND I'LL HANDLE THE FRONT.
341
THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT YOU, BATMAN...
YOU NEVER FAIL TO KEEP A DATE.
KLAK
THE FIREWORKS FACTORY! HE'S PULLING A SWITCH--SUBSTITUTING THE FOURTH OF JULY--BECAUSE WASHINGTON FOUGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE!
KAWHOOM
MAYBE... BUT--
GOTTA GET THERE AND--
NO, ROBIN!! STOP--!
THERE MIGHT BE SOMEONE IN THERE, BATMAN! WE'VE GOTTA SAVE 'EM!
NO--! CALENDAR MAN IS NOT A KILLER BY NATURE!
THE ONLY DEATHS HE WANTS ARE OURS!
HA HA HA
AND SO THE KID IS THE WEAK LINK AFTER ALL!

VHAROOM
THE BURGLAR ALARM BACK UP THE STREET, BATMAN--! FROM THE BANK!
YOU WERE RIGHT--THERE'S NOTHING OF VALUE IN A FIRE-MORA'S FACTORY!
IT WAS ONLY A RUSE--TO DISTRACT US FROM THE REAL CRIME!
I... I'M SORRY, BATMAN... AND AFTER I JUST PROMISED TO--
YOUR ONLY CONCERN WAS TO SAVE LIVES, ROBIN--THERE'S NOTHING TO FORGIVE...
"... NOT IF YOU'VE LEARNED YOU MUST OBEY ME--
50% LOAN FINANCING FOR 1 YR. YEAR!
"--EVERY TIME, AND WITHOUT QUESTION."
EATING MY DUST AGAIN, EH, BATMAN--?
--AND I DO BELIEVE MY NEW METOXIC CYCLE IS EVEN BETTER THAN THE ONE I LEFT IN THE ALLEY!
SO NOW WE'RE LEFT TO PUZZLE OUT TOMORROW NIGHT'S "SAINT PATRICK'S DAY" CRIME...
WITH HIM, THERE'S ALWAYS ANOTHER DAY
NOT IF WE DON'T STOP HIM BEFORE THE NIGHT AFTER TOMORROW.
ELSEWHERE IN GOTHAM, THE NEXT NIGHT:
UH, EXCUSE ME... I, UH... EXCUSE ME?
ARE YOU UH AN INSTRUCTOR HERE?
BODY


I, UH . MY NAME'S BILL MODELL
I'M UH, LOOKING FOR A MS VICKI VALE...
HARDBODY
SAW HER A HALF-HOUR AGO ON THE RUNNING TRACK.
THERE YOU ARE, VICKI...!
OH, HELLO, BILL.
VICKI... WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU DOING?
FIVE MILES.
"FIVE MILES"-- WELL, THAT'S ALL VERY WELL AND GOOD, VICKI, BUT I THOUGHT WE HAD A DATE.
I DIDN'T ACCEPT ANY DATE, BILL-- THIS IS ONE OF MY MAJOR WORKOUT NIGHTS.
YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO SEE ME AND I SAID YOU COULD MEET ME HERE
SO TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES AND WE CAN TALK WHILE YOU RUN ALONGSIDE
"WE CAN TALK WHILE"?
OF COURSE.
WHAT COULD BE MORE REASONABLE?
13

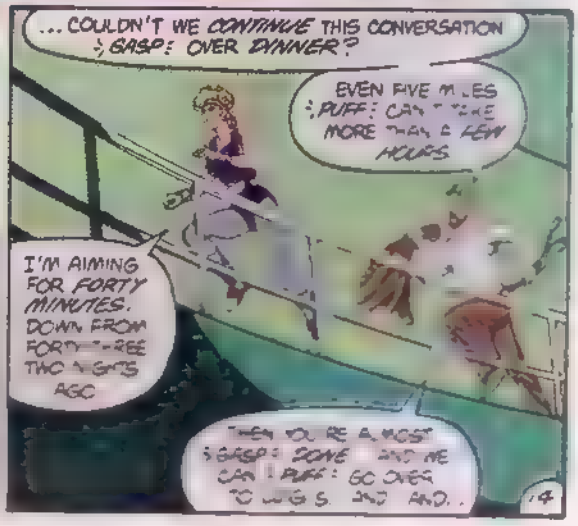

RUN MUCH, BILL?
STARTED A MONTH AGO, AND I FEEL GREAT NOW.
I FAIL TO SEE ;PUFF; HOW PHYSICAL TORTURE RELATES TO FEELING ;GASP; GREAT..
ONLY FROM DEADLINES AND THE IRS-- AND I CERTAINLY DIDN'T KNOW YOU WENT IN FOR THIS SORT OF MASOCHISM...
.. BUT WASN'T IT A MONTH AGO THAT YOUR PROBLEMS WITH BRUCE WAYNE ;PUFF; CAME TO A HEAD?

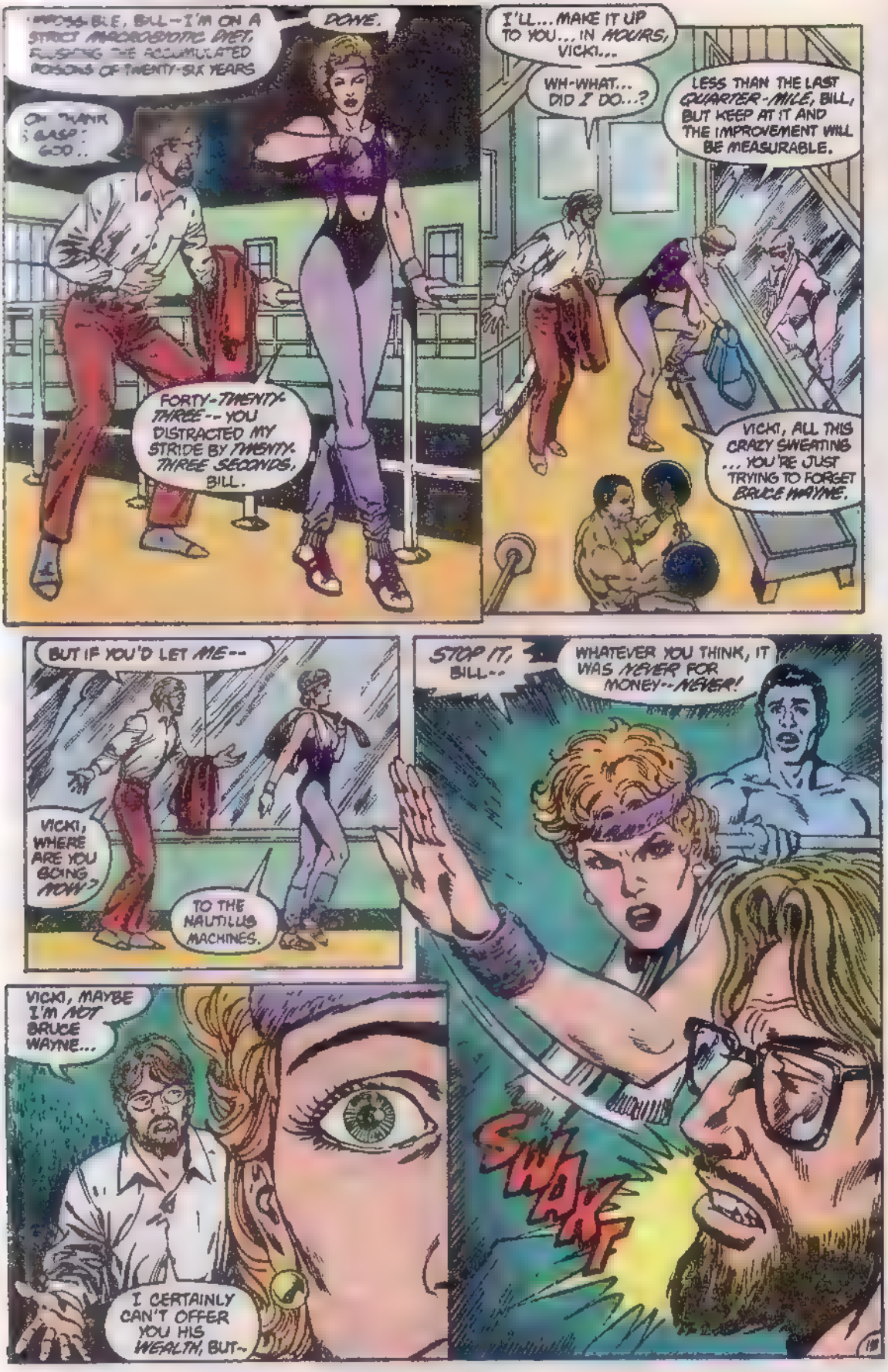

ON A PURELY ASSOCIATIONAL LEVEL, I SUPPOSE THERE MIGHT BE A MINOR CORRELATION--


--BUT WHAT'S WRONG WITH TRANSVECTION OF DISILLUSIONMENT INTO A CATALYST FOR ACTUALIZING THE POTENTIAL OF ONE'S SELF?

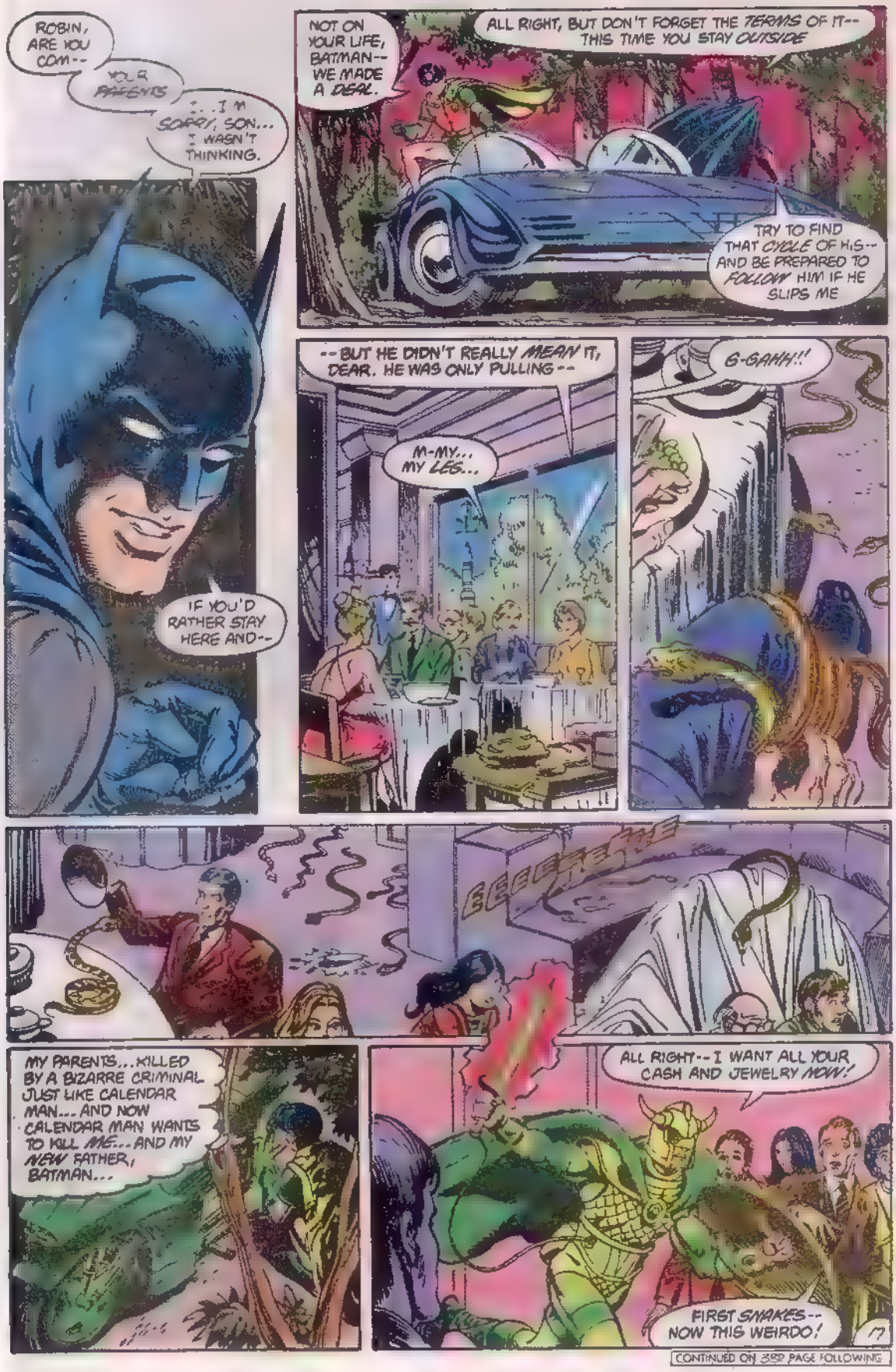
GOOD ;GASP; GOD! YOU HAVEN'T ;PUFF; JOINED A CULT TOO?!
FIGHTING BACK IN THE ARENA OF ONE'S SELF IS HARDLY A CULT, BILL.
MAYBE ;GASP; NOT... BUT THE JARGON SURE PUTS THE VATICAN ;PUFF; TO SHAME.

READING SOMETHING OTHER THAN THE LATEST BESTSELLER IS THE QUICKEST ESCAPE FROM THE MEDIOCRITY OF THE HEAD MIND, BILL.


...COULDN'T WE CONTINUE THIS CONVERSATION ;GASP; OVER DINNER?
EVEN FIVE MILES ;PUFF; CAN'T TAKE MORE THAN A FEW HOURS
I'M AIMING FOR FORTY MINUTES. DOWN FROM FORTY-THREE TWO NIGHTS AGO
;GASP; DONE AND ME CAN ;PUFF; GO OVER TO WIG'S 3RD AND..

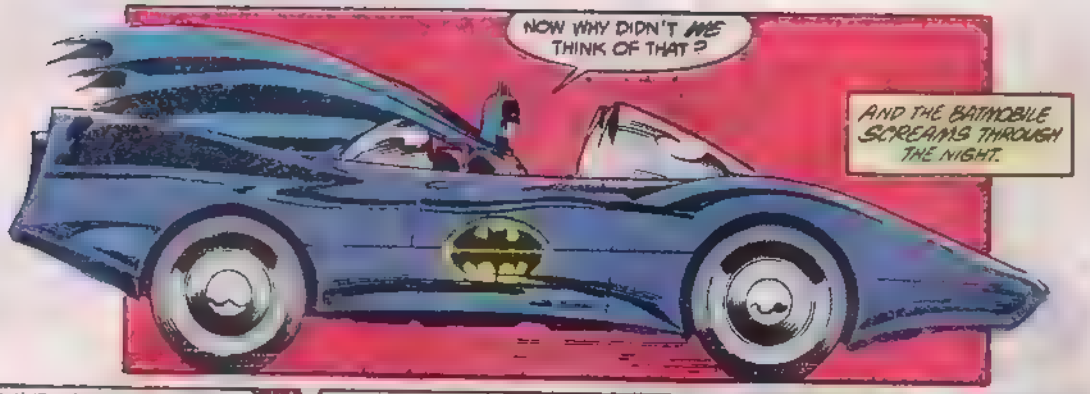

IMPOSSIBLE, BILL—I'M ON A STRICT MACROBIOTIC DIET, FLUSHING THE ACCUMULATED POISONS OF TWENTY-SIX YEARS
DONE.
OH, THANK GASP! GOD..
FORTY-TWENTY-THREE--YOU DISTRACTED MY STRIDE BY TWENTY-THREE SECONDS, BILL.
I'LL... MAKE IT UP TO YOU... IN HOURS, VICKI...
WH-WHAT... DID I DO...?
LESS THAN THE LAST QUARTER-MILE, BILL, BUT KEEP AT IT AND THE IMPROVEMENT WILL BE MEASURABLE.
VICKI, ALL THIS CRAZY SWEATING ... YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO FORGET BRUCE WAYNE.
BUT IF YOU'D LET ME--
VICKI, WHERE ARE YOU GOING NOW?
TO THE NAUTILUS MACHINES.
STOP IT, BILL--
WHATEVER YOU THINK, IT WAS NEVER FOR MONEY--NEVER!
SWAK!
VICKI, MAYBE I'M NOT BRUCE WAYNE...
I CERTAINLY CAN'T OFFER YOU HIS WEALTH, BUT--

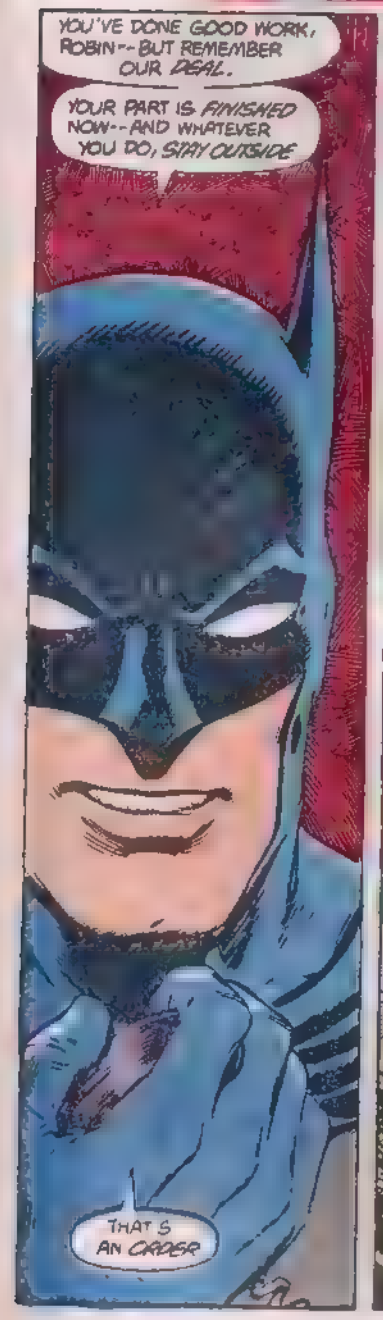
VICKI...!
IT WAS SOMETHING NOBODY CAN REPLACE!
SO DON'T EVEN TRY!
LISTEN, FRIEND, WE'VE GOT A SPECIAL WORKOUT PROGRAM DESIGNED TO LET YOU FIGHT BACK AGAINST THINGS LIKE THAT WITHIN SIX MONTHS.
GO TO HELL AND TAKE YOUR MUSCLES WITH YOU..
THE ANTICIPATION OF SPRING ALWAYS MEANS GOOD BUSINESS FOR PAT'S RESTAURANT ON THE GREEN IN GOTHAM PARK.
PAT'S TAVERN
THIS YEAR, HOWEVER, MIGHT WELL MARK A CHANGE...
...WERE IT NOT FOR A STRANGELY GARBED DUO HIDDEN IN THE NEARBY TREES.
--THEFT IN ZOO'S REPTILE HOUSE...
AND SAINT PATRICK SUPPOSEDLY DROVE THE SNAKES OUT OF IRELAND.
LET'S GO, ROBIN.
R
15

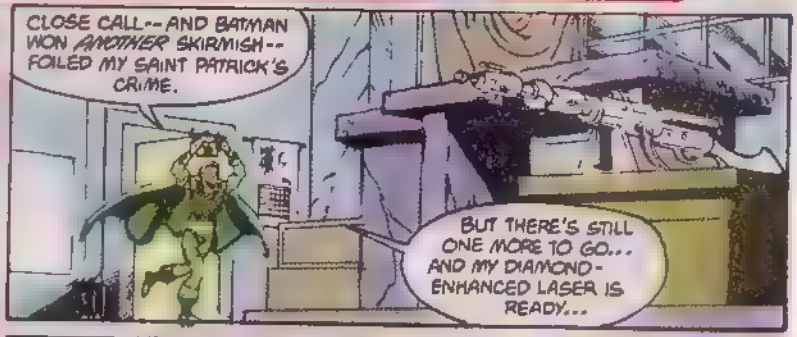

ROBIN, ARE YOU COM--
YOUR PARENTS
...I'M SORRY, SON... I WASN'T THINKING.
IF YOU'D RATHER STAY HERE AND--
NOT ON YOUR LIFE, BATMAN-- WE MADE A DEAL.
ALL RIGHT, BUT DON'T FORGET THE TERMS OF IT-- THIS TIME YOU STAY OUTSIDE
TRY TO FIND THAT CYCLE OF HIS-- AND BE PREPARED TO FOLLOW HIM IF HE SLIPS ME
--BUT HE DIDN'T REALLY MEAN IT, DEAR. HE WAS ONLY PULLING --
M-MY... MY LEG...
G-GAHH!!
BEEEEEEEEE
MY PARENTS...KILLED BY A BIZARRE CRIMINAL JUST LIKE CALENDAR MAN... AND NOW CALENDAR MAN WANTS TO KILL ME... AND MY NEW FATHER, BATMAN...
ALL RIGHT-- I WANT ALL YOUR CASH AND JEWELRY NOW!
FIRST SNAKES-- NOW THIS WEIRDO!
17
CONTINUED ON 33RD PAGE FOLLOWING

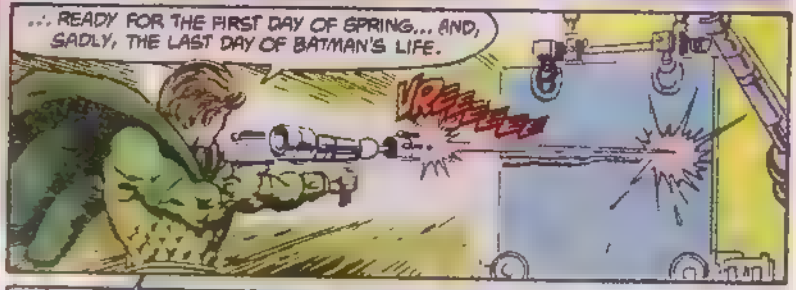
..LEAVE YOUR VALUABLES WHERE THEY ARE.
BATMAN!
HIT HIM TOO HARD-- RIGHT THROUGH THE WINDOW!
SWAK
A COBRA!!
EH--?
WEESH
GOT TO TAKE HIM BEFORE HE CAN--
FWUMP
THAPT
CALL THE POLICE--AND TELL THEM TO BRING THE ZOO'S SNAKE HANDLERS!
JUST ENOUGH OF A DELAY FOR CALENDAR MAN TO MAKE HIS ESCAPE.
MY METRONIC CYCLE-- BOTH TIRES FLAT!
I ONLY HOPE ROBIN'S ON THE BA...
18

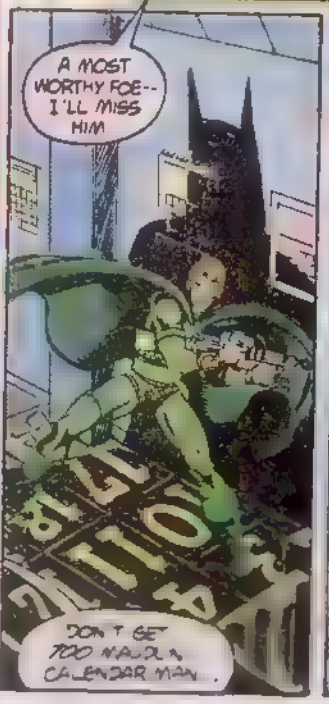
NOW * BELOW'S BEFORE THIS PARK IS CRAWLING WITH -- COPS -- NOT TO MENTION BATMAN.
GOT TO REACH MY SANCTUM ON FOOT -- USING THE COVER OF TREES AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE...
...AND SIMPLY BREAK FOR IT -- AS FAST AS I CAN RUN
IT IS NOT FAST ENOUGH
AND, TEN MINUTES LATER:
BATMAN, IS MY BELT RADIO BUSTED AGAIN, OR DO YOU READ ME?
I'M HERE, ROBIN -- WHAT'VE YOU GOT?
FOLLOWED HIM ON FOOT --
-- TILL HE DUCKED INTO THE SOUTHWEST CORNER BUILDING AT MARCH AND DAY STREETS.

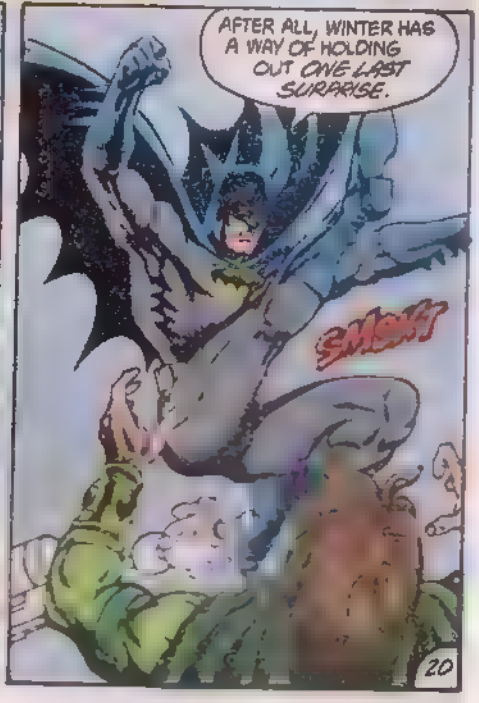

NOW WHY DIDN'T ME THINK OF THAT?
AND THE BATMOBILE SCREAMS THROUGH THE NIGHT.


YOU'VE DONE GOOD WORK, ROBIN--BUT REMEMBER OUR DEAL.
YOUR PART IS FINISHED NOW--AND WHATEVER YOU DO, STAY OUTSIDE
THAT'S AN ORDER


CLOSE CALL--AND BATMAN WON ANOTHER SKIRMISH--FOILED MY SAINT PATRICK'S CRIME.
BUT THERE'S STILL ONE MORE TO GO... AND MY DIAMOND-ENHANCED LASER IS READY...


...READY FOR THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING... AND, SADLY, THE LAST DAY OF BATMAN'S LIFE.
VRRRRRRRRR

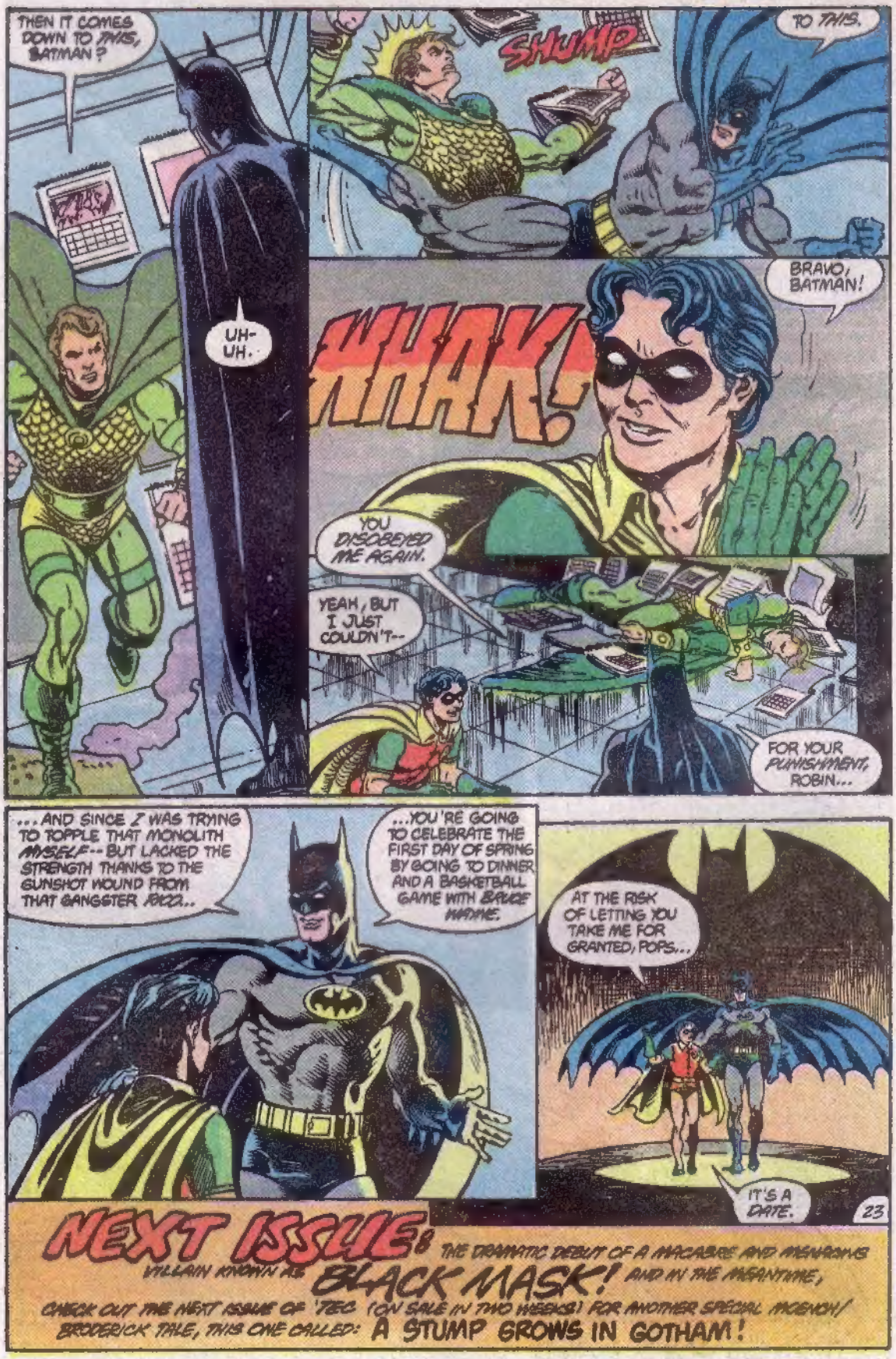

A MOST WORTHY FOE--I'LL MISS HIM
DON'T GET TOO NAUGHTY, CALENDAR MAN.

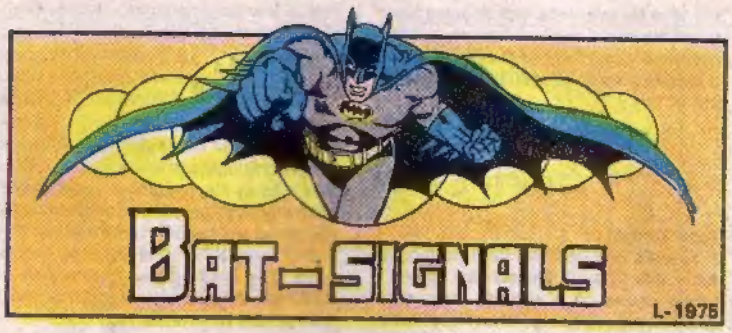

AFTER ALL, WINTER HAS A WAY OF HOLDING OUT ONE LAST SURPRISE.
SMOKE

THROK!
I... I GUESS HE DOESN'T NEED ME...
IN FACT, I'D PROBABLY ONLY GET IN THE WAY...
KLUD
WHAP
WAIT A MINUTE!
KUNCH
THAT HEADBUTT STUNNED BATMAN!
CALENDAR MAN'S GETTING AWAY-- GOING FOR HIS WEAPON...
...AND I JUST WATCHED THAT THING CUT RIGHT THROUGH A SHEET OF SOLID METAL!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

HE'S GOT IT!
MOVE, BATMAN!
YOU POSE A GRAVE DILEMMA, MY ADVERSARY--FORCING ME TO FIERCE AMBIVALENCE.
ON THE ONE HAND, I WANT NOTHING MORE THAN TO GLOAT...
VRRZZZZZZ
...BUT ON THE OTHER, I TRULY HATE TO SEE YOU GO.
I SUPPOSE NEITHER OF US HAS ANY CHOICE, REALLY.
MY STONEHENGE REPLICA IS MADE OF ACTUAL STONE, BUT THIS LASER MELTS STEEL...
A PITY YOU HAD TO FORCE THE SEASON, IF ONLY BY ONE NIGHT, BUT I'M AFRAID THIS IS GOOD-BYE...
CAN'T JUST WATCH!
I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING!
PKASH
TUP
CHUDT


THEN IT COMES DOWN TO THIS, BATMAN?
UH-UH..
SHUMP
TO THIS.
WHAK!
BRAVO, BATMAN!
YOU DISOBEYED ME AGAIN.
YEAH, BUT I JUST COULDN'T--
FOR YOUR PUNISHMENT, ROBIN...
...AND SINCE I WAS TRYING TO TOPPLE THAT MONOLITH MYSELF-- BUT LACKED THE STRENGTH THANKS TO THE GUNSHOT WOUND FROM THAT GANGSTER ÆCCA..
...YOU'RE GOING TO CELEBRATE THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING BY GOING TO DINNER AND A BASKETBALL GAME WITH BRUCE WAYNE.
AT THE RISK OF LETTING YOU TAKE ME FOR GRANTED, POPS...
IT'S A DATE.
23
NEXT ISSUE! THE DRAMATIC DEBUT OF A MACABRE AND MENACING VILLAIN KNOWN AS BLACK MASK! AND IN THE MEANTIME,
CHECK OUT THE NEXT ISSUE OF 'TEC (ON SALE IN TWO WEEKS!) FOR ANOTHER SPECIAL INGENOH/ BRODERICK TALE, THIS ONE CALLED: A STUMP GROWS IN GOTHAM!



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Dear Len,

Knowing as I do Doug Moench's peerless skill at writing comics, I shouldn't have been surprised when I read "Darkly Moved the Pawns" in the March BATMAN. But I was. I didn't think even Doug could have brought the Night-Slayer story to such a satisfying conclusion within 23 pages. I guess I should've known better. I was initially a little perturbed that Anton Knight got away in the end. However, after a little thought, I found I actually preferred it this way. At least he won't have to break out of jail when he decides the time is right to have another go at The Batman. Which I hope he does, eventually. (You, or rather Bob, stated in the letters column that Nocturna will return—yippee! But no mention was made of the Night-Slayer.)

Doug used the showdown with Hamilton Hill to display Batman's amazing mental prowess. Everything fell into place, not by happenstance but as a result of the Gotham Guardian's planning. Not only was Anton exposed as a Bat-Impostor, not only was Hill revealed to the world as a crook (I cheered at that!), but even Natalie was seen by Amanda Greecz as all that Bruce Wayne said she was. (Ironically, my sympathies had, by this time, shifted somewhat in favor of Natalie's position. The dialogue between her and Jason on pages eight and nine was wonderful!)

I really can't overstate just how much BATMAN and DETECTIVE COMICS have improved under Doug's and your stewardship. This issue is certainly one of the finest in the book's long run so far. (Which doesn't mean I don't expect improvement.)

Lastly for this LOC, Rick Hoberg and Alfredo Alcala look as if they've been drawing together for years! Some of the layouts here, page 18, for example, are marvelous. And page 18—beautiful!

Do you get the feeling I like this book?

Dale Cox
41 Whitecross Road
Warrington, Cheshire WA5 1LR
England

*****

Dear Bat-People,

Issue #381 started off in fine fashion, with a dramatic cover: the false yet impressive Batman looks up in surprise as the real and vicious-looking Batman swoops down from above. (Interestingly, this action occurs against the background of a building bearing the name "Gotham Trust." This is symbolically appropriate, since, with the machinations of Mayor Hill, the two Batmen are indeed waging a battle for the trust of the city's public.) And indeed, the ultimate confrontation in the story is all that the cover promised—and more. The appearance of the once-again properly costumed Batman is a dramatic and effective one. This is all the more impressive an accomplishment given the fact that the reader is *expecting* this to happen and expecting it to be dramatic. (But then, we also *wanted* it to happen and to be dramatic.)

It is gratifying to finally see Batman come out on top. Things did not all go as he planned, but he was able to persevere and to triumph. It is also interesting to note that a bit of ruthlessness was involved on his part. As he reveals, he was only briefly under the spell of thinking he was the Night-Slayer, but he let that impression persist for several days, even in the minds of his friends and loved ones (thus causing great anguish and concern), so that he could further his ultimate plan. Of course, it can be argued that this was necessary and ultimately for the overall good of the public. But he also used the situation to set up Nocturna to look bad in the eyes of the social worker—and that was for more personal gain. Still, I guess he was only fighting fire with fire in this instance.

Some might say that the final scene with the blind Tina was merely a bit of ego-gratification for Batman, but I prefer to think it reflected his seldom-exhibited kindness and tenderness.

T.M. Maple
Box 1272 Station B
Weston, Ontario M9L 2R9
Canada

*****

Dear Len and Bob,

The story "Darkly Moved the Pawns" was a nice cap to an exciting story line, but that's not why I'm writing this short note.

Page 18 where the *real* Batman makes his entrance was one of the finest showings of Hoberg and Alcala's talents.

A page that readers will remember for years to come.

Stephen Scott Beau Smith
Comicast
#1 Fourth Street
Williamsburg Colony
Barboursville, WV 25504

Dear Len,

The conclusion to the Nocturna saga was good with one exception: How could you let Night-Slayer get away? After all that, he still got away. Hopefully he'll be caught soon.

Rick Hoberg is a great artist. I hope he draws BATMAN for a long time.

Jeff DeWitt
903 College Avenue
Redlands, CA 92373

Just as in real life, Jeff, comic book lives are not perfect and sometimes the unavoidable happens. In this case, Night-Slayer got away. Next time, and there will be a next time, he may not be so lucky.

*****

Dear Len and Doug,

Hopefully, the Catwoman's return next issue will have some claws and fireworks in it. Issue #381 was something of a letdown for me—at least from a fan who was expecting an explosive Götterdämmerung finale, as in Gerry Conway's memorable end-of-Boss-Thorne story. Hamilton Hill went out not with a bang but with a pitiful whimper, in the arms of a comforting Commissioner Gordon. C'mon, Jim, hit him at least once! He deserves it already. Anton Knight is still running around loose. Big deal, he was getting boring. Nocturna continues to hold up her end of the story in good style, but I liked her better in long skirts. More spooky that way.

As for the Earth-1, Earth-2 stuff brought up by a reader regarding BATMAN #20, why be sticklers over that nonsense? I laugh at paranoia about the aging process in comics. Vicki Vale should belong on Earth-2 if you want to be 100% technical.

One strong suggestion—how about a romance for Commissioner Gordon, and not necessarily someone his own age, either. It's been 40 years without a serious girl, people are starting to whisper. He's certainly a better catch than that spoiled playboy Bruce What's-his-name.

Charles D. Brown
39 Stockton Street
Brentwood, NY 11717

Sorry the finale wasn't all that you hoped it would be, but according to the deluge of mail, you're in the minority. As for your Earth-1 or Earth-2 comments, we agree—readers must have flexible minds when it comes to long-running series such as BATMAN. And regard-

ing Commissioner Gordon, if he hasn't had a woman in 40 years, that certainly will make Barbara Gordon a much older woman. It has never been established how long it has been since his wife died, but we assume it's been a lot less than 40 years and probably even less than 20 years.

*****

Dear Editor,

So many positive things transpired in BATMAN #381 that I hardly know which one was the most satisfying.

Mayor Hamilton Hill was discredited, leading to the vindication of Batman; James W. Gordon was reinstated as Commissioner of Police; and Natalia Knight relinquished her guardianship of Jason Todd.

Add to this the fact that Catwoman is coming back to Gotham City next issue and—uh-oh, what does this portend for Nocturna?

I admit that I resented her intrusions in the past and gave her some nasty cracks, but that was before I saw the true, unselfish, compassionate Ms. Knight in #381.

Control yourself, Selina. Talk to her, Len.

Jeffrey Lowndes
809 Sunset Street
Scranton, PA 18509

*****

Dear Len and Bob,

BATMAN #381 is, without a doubt, a most brilliant conclusion to the greatest comics saga I have ever read. It was a long time coming, and even though fortnightly installments softened the blow, it was worth every second of the wait. I couldn't list all the things I specifically liked about the issue because I liked all of it, but the scene that stands out most in my mind was page 18, finally seeing The Batman back in all his glory and the ensuing battle in front of the TV cameras, and of course, the belittling of Hill, who's been causing strife for too long.

Nocturna and Night-Slayer are such incredibly good villains that all of Batman's other enemies pale into insignificance. Even the intervention of the Mad Hatter seemed to be just a small complication. And I loved the conclusion; it shows how great a man Bruce Wayne really is.

Michael Pigott
17 Hawking Street
Preston, Victoria
Australia 3072

*****

Dear Bat-People,

The most beautiful part of #381 was not the fact that Anton was exposed as the bogus Batman. It was not the fact that Mayor Hill was also exposed. It was the ending with Tina.

The ending was not only beautiful, but it brought out the more sensitive side of Batman that had been lost in the shuffle for quite some time. For her, he exposed his love for everyone and showed how much he cared not just for her, but for everyone else. I do not, however, believe a long-lasting relationship could spring out of this.

M.L. Walker
Milwaukee, OR

*****

Dear Troops,

There's one problem with reading a story like "Darkly Moved the Pawns" when you're on a subway train: you can't let out with a big cheer. Not only do we partially straighten out the Night-Slayer storyline, but we boot Mayor Hill in the coccyx as well. Another attempt by Hill to get the Batman outlawed, and the attempt almost works too well. It would appear that Jason is coming to accept Natalia, maybe even like her. I'm really glad to see that Bullock is going to pull through; should have known that it would take more than one bullet to bring down "Mr. Titanic."

The ending was rather sweet. I hope that we will get to see Tina some more in future stories.

What, pray tell, is Zip-a-Tone?

Willie Holmes
8453 S. Saginaw Avenue
Chicago, IL 60617

Zip-a-Tone is a commercial art supply that is simply patterns and designs that are on adhesive-backed sheets of paper and can be cut and pasted into any shape you desire. We used Zip-a-Tone on Night-Slayer to give him a different look. Many artists use Zip-a-Tone for backgrounds or to create unique moods that are difficult to sustain over many pages.

*****

Dear Len, Doug, Rick, and Bob,

I never thought it'd end—but it did in the always-famous DC style. To give a review of BATMAN #381 has to take lots of guts, so I'll give it to you, piece by piece.

THE STORY: You ended the Batman/Robin/Nocturna/Night-Slayer/Mayor Hill saga in an unpredictable manner that was appealing to my usual tastes. Leave it to Doug Moench and DC to build up the suspense—and lead it up to a suspenseful conclusion. Perhaps one of my favorite parts was the last page itself, when Batman removes his cowl—just for Tina. That page proves that though he may be the fabled Creature of the Night, the Caped Crusader is still human.

THE ART: I'm glad that when Len needed a replacement for Mr. Newton, Rick Hoberg came along to fill the spot. However, I would like to see Rick ink his pencils—not that I have anything against Alfredo Alcala, but just so Rick can please his adored fans.

So, Catwoman's coming back, huh? Well, I have one thing to say to Messrs. Wein and Moench about that: Do not, I repeat, do not change Selina Kyle back into the criminal she used to be! I like seeing Selina on the right side of the law and it's about time she was treated more like a law-abiding citizen, rather than the criminal she used to be.

John Lavernoich
849 E. Wakefield Blvd.
Winsted, CT 06098

As you have seen by now, Selina is a more complex character than either a simple criminal or a law-abiding citizen. She's been through more experiences than any three people and this has given her some unique perceptions about the world around her and the way things work. The mail on her appearance in #382 was certainly interesting and we'll look at that next time.

*****

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Next week brings us WHO'S WHO #5 and with it the conclusion to the C's. In this star-studded volume will be a number of Bat-villains from the past including the nefarious Cluemaster, Crime Doctor, and Croc, the man behind the birth of the new Robin. For those of you wondering about Jason's origins, check this item out. As usual, written by Len with art by the greatest collection of artists ever assembled since last issue.

Also out this month is CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS #4 and with it changes unlike any you may have imagined. In addition to more of the Outsiders, Legion, and Titans we'll see Batgirl (and you thought we forgot about her), Supergirl, the new Dr. Light, the Red Tornado, and of course, many others. Story by Marv Wolfman, art by George Pérez, Dick Giordano, and Mike DeCarlo. What more can you ask for?

As for BATMAN, resolutions to the Nocturna saga are still being worked out, including changes in Gotham's political climate. Doug is concocting some new twists on old themes, plus continuing to bring back old foes like the Calendar Man and new creations. Don't you dare miss an issue or you'll be disappointed.

An aside of sorts to Donna Fralix: Superman met Jason last year and the two cross paths this summer in the SUPERMAN ANNUAL.

Until next time, enjoy the coming spring and keep smiling.

—Bob Greenberger